

## **CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A floating structure comprising:  
2 a floatable hull that presents an upper deck; and  
3 a storage vessel for storage of a material of the group consisting of hydrocarbon  
4 gas and solid hydrocarbon hydrates.
- 1 2. The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is disposed within the  
2 floatable hull.
- 1 3. The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is located atop the  
2 floatable hull.
- 1 4. The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is surrounded by an  
2 environmental boundary.
- 1 5. The floating structure of claim 4 wherein the environmental boundary comprises  
2 an insulated shell.
- 1 6. The floating structure of claim 1 wherein the storage vessel is disposed within a  
2 center column assembly of the floating structure.

1 7. The floating structure of claim 4 wherein temperature is controlled within the  
2 environmental boundary.

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1 8. The floating structure of claim 7 wherein temperature is controlled via circulation  
2 of a fluid of desired temperature within the boundary.

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1 9. The floating structure of claim 8 wherein fluid pressure of the fluid is also  
2 controlled.

1 10. A floating structure comprising:  
2 a floatable hull that presents an upper deck and defines a hollow central section  
3 therewithin;  
4 a center assembly mounted within the hollow central section and being  
5 retractable and extendable below the hull; and  
6 a plurality of storage vessels disposed within the floatable hull, each of the  
7 storage vessels being useful for storage of hydrocarbon gas or hydrates.

1 11. The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one of the storage vessels is  
2 located upon the upper deck.

1 12. The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one of the storage vessels is  
2 located within the floating hull.

1 13. The floating structure of claim 10 wherein at least one of the storage vessels is

2 located within the center column assembly.

1 14. A method of storing compressed hydrocarbon gases or solid hydrates following  
2 production and prior to transport to a remote location, comprising the steps of:  
3 disposing said gases or hydrates within a storage vessel upon a floating platform;  
4 controlling the temperature of the storage vessel.

1 15. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of offloading the gases or  
2 hydrates to a transport tanker.

1 16. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of mooring the floating  
2 platform in place proximate an offshore production well prior to disposing the gases or  
3 hydrates within the storage vessel.

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1 17. The method of claim 14 wherein the step of controlling the temperature of the  
2 storage vessel comprises circulating a fluid of desired temperature about the storage  
3 vessel.